

WI-297
Bivalve
Public and private

19th and 20th centuries

Located along the edge of the Nanticoke River, the village of Bivalve developed during the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century as a commercial center and trans-shipment point for local produce and shellfish extracted from the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay. Bivalve is defined currently by a group of frame buildings largely dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The most dominant historic structure is the Bivalve United Methodist Church, which stands on a sandy knoll in the center of the village.

Built in 1886, the cruciform frame church is distinguished by a two-story entrance and bell tower, and the edges of the gable roofs are trimmed with delicate sawn decoration. One of the most dominant house forms is the two-and-a-half story, three- or five-bay cross-gabled dwelling. The old Horner Brothers' store is an important historic landmark as well, and it serves to represent the once vital commercial activities at the river's edge.

Originally known as Waltersville, the land on which the village developed was part of a tract known as Beaudley, which descended through the Dashiell and related Walter families during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The original seventeenth century patent encompassed 600 acres and was assigned to James Dashiell. The large tract was fragmented many times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The plantation house that retains the Beaudley name is located approximately a mile inland from the river's shoreline. (See WI-39)

It is not exactly certain when a village started to form at the river's edge, but by 1877 and the printing of the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas a distinct community of Waltersville had formed by that time. The village included a handful of dwellings along with two stores, a blacksmith and wheelwright's shop, a school, and an oyster packing house. At that time, Waltersville did not have its own church and local Methodists attended Jones' Methodist Protestant Church located on the Jesterville Road and the Episcopalians were served by nearby St. Mary's. (See WI-88) In 1886, a group of Methodist Protestants from the Jesterville congregation decided to build a separate church in Waltersville.

Similar to many river- or bay-front communities, economic success was tied largely to regular schedules of steamboat service as well as the bountiful yields of local shellfish and agricultural harvests. In an obvious plan to honor the source of its economic prosperity, the community leaders decided to change the name of the village from Waltersville to Bivalve around 1890-1900. Vegetable canneries operated in Bivalve during the early twentieth century. George D. Insley started a cannery in the area in 1905, and a second firm run by the Roberts Brothers was in business between 1919 and 1940. Following World War II, the growth of Bivalve stagnated like many bay communities with the decline in oyster profits as well as the discontinuation of steamboat service.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Bivalve

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-297

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s):
Architecture
Religion
Commerce
2. Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore
3. Chronological/Development Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance
1870-1930
4. Resource Type(s): District

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. WI-297

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Waltersville

and/or common Bivalve

2. Location

street & number Maryland 349 and adjacent roads ☐ not for publication

city, town Bivalve ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple Owners

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WI-297

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The community of Bivalve, formerly known as Waltersville, is located on the eastern edge of the Nanticoke River mid way between Ragged Point and Hatcrown Point, in Wicomico County, Maryland. Principal road access is provided by means of Nanticoke Road (MD Route 349), and the village is approximately fifteen (15) miles west of Salisbury. In addition to Nanticoke Road, the community is oriented around a number of county roads including Bivalve Wharf Road, Texas Road, and Bivalve Lodge Road.

The historic resources that define Bivalve principally date from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century. Principal among these resources and centrally located in the community is the Bivalve United Methodist Church, erected in 1886 as the Waltersville Methodist Protestant Church (WI-295). Perched on a high sandy knoll, the roughly cruciform frame church is a dominant architectural landmark for the village with its distinctive form and two-story bell tower. The church is accompanied by a nineteenth and twentieth century cemetery. Also individually distinctive to the village is the Horner Brothers Store (WI-294), which stands on Bivalve Wharf Road within a few feet of the Nanticoke River. Operated until 1987 by the Horner brothers, the two-story, ell-shaped frame store survives as a tangible link to the commercial activities that once took place at the river's edge. The old steamboat wharf was located a few hundred feet north of the store location, and store merchandise was transported by means of a railroad siding and hand cart.

Standing near the Horner Brothers' Store is the Insley-Horner house (WI-293), a two-and-a-half story, five-bay, cross-gabled frame dwelling that extends to the rear with a two-story dining room and kitchen wing. Dated around 1890, the frame house features a variety of late nineteenth century architectural woodwork including turned post porches and sawn corner brackets. Joining the house on the site is a small frame summer kitchen and a frame pump house. The cross-gabled Insley-Horner house is a common architectural form for Bivalve and the general region. Located across Bivalve Wharf Road are several other late nineteenth century structures that have been significantly reworked. More modest in scale, these story-and-a-half, three-bay frame dwellings have a center entrance and small windows that light the second floor.

The village consists of approximately thirty-five (35) standing structures that date between 1870 and 1930, the principal period of growth and development for this river-front community.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Located along the edge of the Nanticoke River, the village of Bivalve developed during the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century as a commercial center and trans-shipment point for local produce grown on local farms and shellfish extracted from the Nanticoke River and Chesapeake Bay. Bivalve is defined currently by a group of frame buildings largely dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The most dominant historic structure is the Bivalve United Methodist Church, which stands on a sandy knoll in the center of the village. Built in 1886, the cruciform frame church is distinguished by a two-story entrance and bell tower, and the edges of the gable roofs are trimmed with delicate sawn decoration. One of the most dominant architectural forms is the two-and-a-half story, three- or five-bay cross-gabled dwelling. The old Horner Brothers' store is an important historic landmark and serves to represent the once active commercial activities at the river's edge.

Originally known as Waltersville, the land on which the village developed was part of a tract known as Beaudley, which descended through the Dashiell and related Walter families during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The original seventeenth century patent encompassed 600 acres and was assigned to James Dashiell.(1) The large tract was fragmented many times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The plantation house that retains the Beaudley name is located approximately a mile inland from the river's edge. (See WI-39)

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(Continued)

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PS-2746

8.1 SIGNIFICANCE

Bivalve Survey District

Wicomico County, Maryland

bountiful yields of local shellfish and agricultural harvests. In an obvious plan to honor the source of its economic prosperity, the community leaders decided to change the name of the village from Waltersville to Bivalve around 1890-1900. Vegetable canneries operated in Bivalve during the early twentieth century. George D. Insley operated a cannery in the area beginning in 1905, and a second operation run by the Roberts Brothers was in business between 1919 and 1940.⁽³⁾ Following World War II, the growth of Bivalve stagnated like many bay communities with the decline in oyster profits as well as the discontinuation of steamboat service.

Footnotes

- 1 Dryden, Ruth T. *Land Records of Wicomico County, 1666-1810*. Westminster, Maryland: Family Line Publications, 1992, pp. 40-41.
- 2 John L. Graham, ed. *The 1877 Atlases and other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland*. Salisbury, Maryland: Peninsula Press, 1976, p. 12.
- 3 Burton, R. Lee, Jr. *Canneries of the Eastern Shore*. Centreville, Maryland: Tidewater Publishers, 1986, p. 161.

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WI-297
Bivalve Survey District

